



Environmental News

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BROWNFIELDS COMMUNITIES IN NINE STATES AND D.C. GET \$2 MILLION FOR JOB TRAINING

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On the heels of comprehensive new brownfields legislation passed by Congress, EPA Administrator Christie Whitman today announced \$2 million in grants to provide environmental job training at brownfields sites in nine states and Washington, D.C. Whitman made the announcement during a visit to the Alice Hamilton Occupational Health Center. During the visit the Administrator observed students in the last session of Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response training.

“Job training programs such as this one provide local residents with the skills they need to participate in the cleanup of brownfields in their own communities - and to pursue careers in the environmental field,” Administrator Whitman told students. “Brownfields are eyesores in our otherwise vibrant city neighborhoods and we have to work hard to clean them up and turn them into community assets. When you look at an abandoned gas station or an old warehouse, I know you see the same thing that I do - a playground, a doctor’s office, or a ball field. I appreciate your dedication to making these kinds of transformations possible.”

“EPA wants to help too,” Whitman continued. “That’s why I am proud to announce that EPA is funding 10 new Job Training Demonstration Pilot Projects. The skills learned will make environmental awareness and participation a critical component of life for families living near brownfields in D.C. and all across the country. I am also pleased that the Congress has taken steps to promote brownfields cleanup as well. Both the House of Representatives and then the Senate this week passed legislation that meets the President’s commitment to brownfields. This legislation - similar to these job training programs - provides the tools necessary to make brownfields redevelopment fast and effective.”

Including today’s grant recipients in the District of Columbia and the states of Ohio, Rhode Island, Montana, Iowa, Indiana, Delaware, South Carolina, Washington and New York, brownfields job training program efforts are now active in 23 states and Puerto Rico.

The job training grants, totaling \$200,000 each, are used to teach environmental-cleanup job skills to individuals living in low-income areas in the vicinity of brownfields sites. The majority of participants who successfully complete the training program go on to pursue careers with environmental firms and organizations. Since the program started in 1998, 566 trainees, the majority of whom are minority, have been hired at an average hourly entry-level wage of \$12.12.

Brownfields are abandoned, lightly contaminated properties often found in economically distressed areas, that can be returned to economically thriving, community hubs. Since 1993, the EPA has taken significant steps to clean up brownfields and return them to productive use, awarding over \$200 million in grants to cities, counties, tribes, states, non-profit organizations and educational institutions nationwide.

According to an independent study conducted by the Council for Urban Economic Development, the revitalization of brownfields has created over 22,000 permanent jobs and leveraged \$2.48 in private investment for every dollar spent by federal, state or local governments. A recent study by George Washington University found that for every acre of brownfields redeveloped, 4.5 acres of undeveloped land is saved.

For further technical information, contact Doris Thompson of EPA at 202-260-4483 thompson.doris@epa.gov) or visit: <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

Attached is a summary of each grant awarded today.

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FY 2002 Brownfields Job Training Grants

Groundwork Providence Inc., Rhode Island

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, Groundwork Providence Inc. plans to train 90 participants recruited from underemployed or unemployed residents of Providence's three Enterprise Community neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are predominantly minority and neighborhood poverty rates range as high as 47%. The city contains hundreds of manufacturing mills, most of which are now underused or abandoned. Approximately 150 mills are being considered for economic development or historic preservation. Providence is a leader in the preservation and reuse of historical industrial properties, and the state has a new program that offers tax incentives to businesses reusing vacant mill space. The 252-hour environmental technician training program will consist of health and safety, lead abatement, asbestos abatement, and innovative remediation technologies. The Providence Department of Planning and Development has committed to placing graduates on its list of first source hires.

St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation, Brooklyn, New York

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation (St. Nicks) plans to train 80 participants recruited from among unemployed and underemployed residents of the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn. The Williamsburg neighborhood (population 88,000) is predominantly Hispanic and Black, and more than 25% of the residents live in poverty. Residents are in need of jobs with a career ladder. The area is zoned for mixed use and includes heavy industrial, underused, and vacant brownfields. Two of the city's Assessment Pilot sites slated for cleanup and development are located near St. Nicholas. There is steady demand for entry-level environmental workers by local environmental contractors. The 192-hour Pilot training program will consist of chemical hazards and hazardous materials management, remediation techniques, innovative technologies, and health and safety. Field trips with technology demonstrations are planned to two nearby Assessment Pilot brownfields.

Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Wilmington, Delaware

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control plans to train 50 participants recruited from among undereducated and underemployed residents of the Southbridge and East Wilmington communities. The two communities (population 8,000) are depressed, inner-city neighborhoods in which two-thirds of the residents are minorities. Wilmington has a 200-year history of industrial activity. The City has identified 126 brownfields—a quarter of the city's lands are brownfields. Assessments conducted by the Brownfields Assessment Pilot are expected to generate six to ten remediation projects. The 152-hour Pilot training program will consist of health and safety, introduction to environmental issues, asbestos abatement, lead abatement, and innovative assessment and cleanup technologies. Local environmental contractors have expressed interest in hiring residents trained as environmental technicians to participate in new redevelopment projects.

DC Department of Health, Washington, DC

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, the DC Department of Health plans to train 58 participants recruited from disadvantaged residents of communities impacted by brownfields. Over two-thirds of the District's residents are minorities. The unemployment rate in the District is twice the national unemployment rate, and almost 20 percent of residents live in poverty. The District is experiencing an economic resurgence after decades of decline, and the pressure to assess, clean up, and redevelop the city's numerous vacant industrial and commercial sites is intensifying. The 12-week pilot training program will consist of health and safety, lead and asbestos abatement, hazardous communication, sampling and sample management, site assessments, and innovative investigation technologies. The Job Training Pilot is needed to help ensure that District residents benefit from stable environmental jobs and that local businesses will have a pool of trained environmental technicians from which to hire employees.

Concurrent Technologies Corporation, Greenville, South Carolina

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, Concurrent Technologies Corporation plans to train 75 participants recruited from unemployed and underemployed residents of the West Greenville/Reedy River Corridor. The Corridor is located just west of the downtown. Half of the residents are minorities. One-third of the residents live in poverty, and the average annual income is approximately half of the City-wide average. The Corridor was once the textile center of the region. With the decline in the textile industry and development of the eastern part of the city, the Corridor fell into economic decline. The Corridor remains blighted by a number of abandoned and underused industrial properties, including several large textile facilities. The 260-hour pilot training program will consist of sampling, general industry standards for safety and health, heavy equipment operation and safety, and innovative technologies. Surveys of employers in the Greenville area indicate a strong demand for entry-level environmental technicians.

City of Gary, Indiana

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, the city of Gary plans to train 160 participants recruited from unemployed, underemployed, and other disadvantaged residents in the areas of the Empowerment Zone Development Site and the Airport Development Zone. These areas are the focus of the Gary Empowerment Zone and Brownfields Assessment Pilot, respectively. Neighborhoods near these areas are characterized by low-income households, old housing, and vacant buildings. Unemployment is 14 percent and the poverty rate is 25 percent. A former industrial center, the city has declined along with the decline of the steel industry, resulting in the abandonment of many factories and mill sites. Redevelopment activities are now occurring at major sites in the city. The 220-hour pilot training program will consist of health and safety, lead abatement, asbestos abatement, brownfields and environmental justice, construction trades, and innovative treatment technologies. The city of Gary has a first-source hiring ordinance that requires environmental contractors to hire residents from the city.

City of Cincinnati, Ohio

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, the city of Cincinnati plans to train 75 participants recruited from unemployed and underemployed residents in areas affected by brownfields. Undeveloped brownfields plague the low-income, ethnic minority, and disadvantaged urban cores in the city of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. Redevelopment activities are being generated through the activities of two Brownfields Assessment Pilots, a state Enterprise Zone, and a federal Empowerment Zone. While the redevelopment of brownfields is retaining businesses, the city's Office of Environmental Management has found that there is a lack of community residents with adequate skills to participate in brownfields assessment and remediation projects. The 224-hour pilot training program will consist of health and safety, emergency response, innovative remediation technologies, lead abatement, incident command, and technology demonstrations. On-the-job training will be provided by local environmental employers.

Hawkeye Community College, Waterloo, Iowa

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, Hawkeye Community College plans to train 40 participants recruited from unemployed and underemployed residents of Waterloo's Rath neighborhood, which is just south of the central business district. Fifteen percent of residents in this neighborhood are unemployed, and a third of the households receive public assistance. Waterloo's economy and population declined in the 1980s as a result of changes in the meatpacking industry, leaving many properties vacant or underused. In recent years, Waterloo's economy has become more diversified, and redevelopment activities are being spurred by the Brownfields Assessment Pilot, a state Enterprise Zone, and a Consolidated Urban Revitalization Zone. The 254-hour pilot training program will consist of ecosystem restoration, innovative remediation technologies, hazardous waste handling, lead abatement, asbestos abatement, and health and safety. Local environmental contractors are very interested in hiring trained environmental technicians.

Montana Tech of the University of Montana, Butte, Montana

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, Montana Tech plans to train 60 participants recruited from unemployed and underemployed residents of the Crow Indian Reservation. Unemployment among the 7,900 tribal members living on the Crow Indian Reservation has ranged from 60 percent to 85 percent over the last ten years. The community was severely impacted from abandonment of the Big Horn Carpet Mill in 1974. A Phase II assessment of the site is scheduled to begin soon. The Crow Indians have a natural resources-based economy, and major employers on the Reservation are linked to the environment and environmental preservation. The two-year Pilot training program will consist of three certification tracks for hazardous waste specialist, remediation specialist, and ecosystem management and policy specialist. All tracks include training in health and safety and the use of innovative assessment and cleanup technologies. With proper environmental training, Tribal natural resources can be preserved for future generations while providing job opportunities for impoverished residents of the reservation.

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Nespelem, Washington

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation will train 40 participants recruited from low-income residents of the Colville Reservation. The reservation is located in a remote area of north-central Washington near the Canadian border. Half of the 8,500 Tribal members live on the reservation, where unemployment is 45%. The Indian Health Service has identified 10 brownfields and the Tribal Planning Department has identified 173 illegal dump sites on the reservation. Housing, infrastructure, and economic redevelopment projects are occurring through the activities of the Brownfields Assessment Pilot and a federal Enterprise Community. The 224-hour pilot hazardous materials technician training program will consist of health and safety, lead abatement, asbestos abatement, spill response, innovative technologies, and advanced site assessment. Training is needed for local residents to enable the tribe to address brownfields and other contamination problems on the reservation.